

PLAY

ENTITLED

"The Young Country Schoolm'am"

BY

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AUTHOR OF

**"A Ladies' Aid Business Meeting at Mohawk
Crossroads,"**

"Aunt Mary's Family Album,"

"The Minister's Bride,"

"The Young Village Doctor,"

"Aunt Susan's Visit."

"ALL EQUALLY POPULAR AND SUCCESSFUL."

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CHARACTERS.

The Schoolm'am—Bright girl with pleasing manner, dresses neatly and becomingly.

Ma Sneckleby—Old fashioned full skirt; big gathered apron; very plain dress; hair tight back in a knot with a highcomb.

Pa Sneckleby—Clothes too big; flannel shirt; colored tie; long boots; coat hangs up, which he puts on when he goes out only.

Maria Jane—A pretty girl; very ugly plain dress at first—hair done tight and ugly.

Ikey—A big young man; good natured looking.

Gideon Longface—An elderly appearing man; white doleful face; wears old black Prince Albert; high straight collar and big black bow tie.

The Minister—A bright up-to-date young man; wears neat business suit; a polished manner.

Bersheba Buck—A thin severe appearance, very much overdressed in bad taste; rows of coarse lace sewed over any bright colored skirt.

Mary Brown—A sweet, quietly dressed young girl.

James Hughson—A nice appearing capable young farmer.

Mrs. Crisp—Very angry in appearance; hat crooked and wielding an umbrella.

Tommy Crisp—A nice outspoken little boy of 8 or 10.

Maybell Primrose— Birdie Walker—

Prettily dressed giggling young girls who can sing or play.

Those taking part in the program at the last can be added to the number already taking part, or possibly some of those acting may be talented in music as well and act on program.

Be very careful, and go slowly when choosing your characters. The success of your play depends upon it.

Speak distinctly, and very LOUD and SLOWLY.

Enthuse over the play; talk it up where ever you go; sell your own tickets.

Under no condition cheapen your entertainment by sending children out to sell tickets.

All costumes should be as old-fashioned as possible; wear hoops and bustles when available.

Those taking part must fill in the spaces with quiet natural acting while they are not speaking themselves. Make no noise or action to draw attention from speakers.

Do not delay long between acts.

Do not speak during laughter, and if there is noise repeat the part.

THE YOUNG COUNTRY SCHOOLMA'M.

1st Scene.

Farm Kitchen; long plain table set for supper with colored oilcloth, coarse dishes, lamp in middle of the table; big granite tea pot and pitcher; big calendar and large pictures of horses and cows adorn the walls—a tin washbasin on high stool; comb case above; roller towel; some clothes on a clothes line in corner—a pair of curtains hung up and draped back from shelf to show cans of geraniums; old fashioned high backed rocker and plain chairs. Family at supper. Pa reaching out across the table with fork for potatoes—

Ma—Now pa, when the new schoolm'am comes here boardin', you must set quiet in your seat and wait until sich time as things is passed your way—You are like to put folks eyes out forkin' across the table gittin your potatoes—that's no way to take vittles when company's settin' in to the table.

Ma (stirring cup of tea violently) drinks out of her saucer.

Pa—And how is a man to get the vittles comin' his way if he don't reach, Ma?

Ma—Set still pa, jist set until your time comes, and don't be looking as if there was call for hurry, for folks as has fetchin' up, don't have appetites which is thought to be vulgar, leastways my Cousin Ann Jane as went to the Toronto Exhibit told me, her friends told her so, so she allowed—

Pa—Well Ma, I don't know nothin' about sich things no more do I want to, but I won't have no school

m'am boarding here if I'm to go short on my vittles—(pounds handle of knife on table)—do you hear that Ma?

Ma—What did you say Pa—(bringing in huge pot of tea)—

Maria Jane—Mother couldn't we have a tablecloth on instead of this ugly old oilcloth when the new teacher comes? And the best dishes? I will be so careful of them. I-I hate the table looking so ugly.

Ma—Maria Jane Sneckleby, have you lost what bit of sense you ever had? The best dishes is only used when the Minister comes to tea, as I can hard-endure to see him using them, fearin' he will break them, which if he did, I would never set foot in his church again—good-meanin' man, though he be—

(Pa laughs—tips back his chair and just catches it in time.)

Pa—You wouldn't be goin' that far, now, would you Ma, accidents bein' as like to happen ministers as other folks, they bein' not over much to blame, times.

Ma—Well I am that worritted over the new school-m'am comin' here to board, and now here's Maria Jane, puttin' on airs, as she never was raised to, bein' a good hard workin' girl until Jamie Hopkins goed off to the city and left her.

Pa—Hush Ma.

Maria—Yes, and no wonder if he was ashamed to be

seen with me, look at my dowdy dress, and my Sunday hat bought at a bargain because it was so ugly no one else would buy it.—(Crying).

Ma—(Surprised)—Why Maria Jane whatever has come over you child, talkin' to your own pa and ma as you ought to honor, in sich a way?

Pa—Be easy on the little one ma.—(Patting her roughly.)

Ma—It must be poorly you are Maria Jane (feeling her head). I'll steep up some catnip and boneset for you now child, and you lay down a spell.

Maria—Yes I am sick, sick to death, but I don't need catnip tea. What I do want is something pretty, and becoming to wear, like the other girls have, there is Mary Brown, she has clothes that suit her and mine are all so ugly I am ashamed to be seen and that is the reason why I won't go out any more—(Crying)

Pa—There ain't one of them can touch you for looks Maria Jane, you always was like your pa.—(Patting her lovingly.)

Ma—Well if this don't beat all, our girl takin' on airs, as was the peacefullest, hard workingest girl you could wish to lay an eye on. You know right well Maria Jane, your pa and I have been scrimpin' and savin' every cent to give your own brother Ikey his book-learnin' and havin' sich poor professor men teachin' him as don't know how to put learnin' into folk's heads, has to fail time and again, that bein' as how your pa and I are kept so close run.

Pa—(Squirming)—Ma, give Maria Jane a couple of dollars for herself, make it five maybe, and let her set out and buy a bit of fixins' for herself, like other girls have, she's most twenty and hasn't a lazy bone in her body, bein' like her pa, everyway you take her. Like as not the new schoolm'am will be took up with wearin' store clothes and the like.—(Maria gives his arm a loving hug.)

Ma—And what is that to you Pa what the new schoolm'am wears? You as would set at your vittles till sundown, and see your lawful wife toilin' and moilin' till she's wore to a shadow.—(Gets up and begins to fly around then stops)—It's sorry I am I ever laid out to take the new schoolma'm, as has turned our happy home upside down already, settin' notions in Maria Jane's head.—(Pa gulps tea from saucer, rises awkwardly)

Pa—Well I guess I'll go and plough the back field. Times I wish Ikey had never left the farm, he would have been a rare help and a good farmer, would Ikey—(Sighing).

Ma—(Indignantly)—Ikey was never cut out for a farmer pa, as I have told you afore now, Ikey has no ordinary head, give the boy time, I often think if he was keepin' company with some good girl as would give him ambition, it would help Ikey.—(Scraping dishes quietly. Maria going in and out working.)

Pa—Well of course you know best ma. I'm a plain man myself, but times I think we've made a mistake with Ikey. It's takin' a queer lot of horse power to git him pulled through his schoolin'

Ma—Get to your ploughin' pa, and leave matters as need settlin' to your wife as knows. We are all in a moil gettin' things set straight afore the new schoolm'am comes, and mind pa, don't stir your tea like as if you was churnin', and set still on your chair, or like as not you will fall backwards and hit your head on the stove softenin' your brains, which is well known to your lawful wife as your head is soft enough already.

Pa—I'll be careful ma, but go slow, it is hard to mind your manners and set still waitin' for vittles when a fork will fetch things your way easy like and no waitin'.—(Puts on hat and smock and goes out.)

Ma—Fly around now Maria Jane and git your mind off worldly things, your pa encourages you in sich goings on, and he never did have no sense, as I knew well when he asked me to marry him, me feelin' it was my duty to take him and manage for him, which I have done faithful, none bein' able to deny it.

Maria Jane—Pa is always kind and good-natured. Will you let me have the \$5.00 ma, pa said I could. I would make a muslin dress for myself. Please do ma.

Ma—Well, well, we'll see Maria Jane. You're a good girl and hard workin' like your ma, and if it wasn't we needed so much to keep Ikey goin' you'd git more.

Maria—(Hugs mother)—Oh thank you so much ma. I know you are going to let me have it and I will work ever so hard to get ready for the teacher, you lie down and rest dear.

Ma—Me lie down, with butter to make and bread and buns to fire, not to mention cakes and pies to cook up—(rolls up sleeves)—

Maria—I can do some baking ma.

Ma—Never child, your own ma hasn't a lazy bone in her body as I often told your pa afore now when he's sittin' around out at the barn, restin' from doin' nothin' in particular as any one with eyes could see.—(Calls out to Maria)

Ma—Maria Jane be sure and scrape that hasty pud-din' pot well, clean pots is more important than fine clothes, mind that child.

Maria—(calls)—Yes mother I will.

Ma—She is a good child is Maria Jane, favors her ma, I hate to scrimp Ikey, but will try and give her a little spending money to lay out for once. I do hope the new schoolma'm will be plain and sensible like, not puttin' vain foolish notions into her head.—(Goes out with armful of dishes)—

CURTAIN FALLS.

SCENE II.

The Schoolma'am's Arrivel—Winter Time

Supper table set, coarse white cloth, coarse dishes. Maria Jane, dressed in plain dark dress, hair straight back.

Maria—How I hate the look of the table mother, I wouldn't mind working twice as hard if we could have things nice.

Ma—Maria Jane lay your hand to settin' the vittles on the table, I do declare there's no livin' with you lately, you're that hard to put up with, with all your airs. You should learn to be content with sech things as you can git, bein' as you can't git anything else.

(Confusion and sleigh bells outside)

Enter schoolma'am, pa and James Hughson carrying large trunk.

Pa—This way James, this here box is hefty, it weighs more than a three year old. Here—

Miss Wise—Oh, I am so sorry to trouble you with that heavy trunk, do put it down for a moment and rest.

James—No trouble Miss Wise. It is more bulky than heavy. (Lifts his hat to Maria Jane who is in the background).

Pa—It is hefty to be sure mam, you must have a sight of clothes laid by. Where is your ma Maria

Jane? This is our Maria Jane. This is the teacher Maria Jane. She's a good girl, she 'as her pa's ways.

Maria—(Shakes hands timidly)—I am so glad you are to stay here Miss Wise.

Miss Wise—Oh thank you, so very much for your kind welcome. I was hopelessly lonesome.

Ma—(Bustling in arms full of dishes)—Well now, and so you are the new schoolma'm. (Shakes hands heartily) It's right glad I am to make your acquaintance ma'm. (Standing back to look at her) You don't look over strong to be sure child. Why land sakes John James, I thought you was gone to Toronto. (Shakes hands warmly)

James—I was the Mrs. Sneckleby but returned on the same train with Miss Wise and was giving a lift with the trunk.

Ma—Well lay by your things in the spare room Miss Wise as has been aired for you. There bein' no fire in it for a year the sheets do git a bit damp at times. Maria Jane show Miss Wise where to lay by her things. (They go out)
Pa go and git yourself washed up for supper, comb your hair too which is standin' up for all the world like the stubble in the back pasture, put by your coat on that peg John James and set in to supper.—(Pa washes)

James—Oh. I think perhaps I had better not—Jennie.

Ma—You jest set in John James, I've knowed you since you wore bibs and you can't put on no airs

with me, bein' as I have an apple pie you could eat at a settin' when you was half growed.

James—You have discovered my weakness Mrs. Sneckleby and the appeal of the pie is strong and compelling. I must wash my hands first however. (Pa empties basin out the door.)

Ma—Well there is the basin and towel and comb as pa has just finished usin' in the corner there. ^re you washed and combed pa?

Pa—Yes ma. When can we eat, movin' trunks a rare hungry work.

Ma—Set around quiet pa, and don't be callin' out for your meals. I told you afore it ain't polite to be hungry. —(Pa sits down slowly with a groan, tips chair back.)

Pa—I don't set any store by that kind of politness ma —I wish you'd let me set in to the table with a free hand—I do.

Ma—For the lands sake pa keep quiet, the schoolma'm will hear you as clear as a steam-whistle—(Sits down and wipes face with apron)—I do declare John James, I am so upset with the new schoolma'm comin', and Maria Jane wantin' clothes and music lessons, and sich like, her as never called for nothin' and was so peaceful like. I am afraid that city fellow as visited here with our Ikey last summer put notions in her head, as no girls head should be filled with nohow.

James—Oh, I see now Mrs. Sneckleby, I didn't understand why Jennie refused to go out with me. I did not know why she was so changed.

Ma—No more do I know, whiles, I think the child is ailin' with some kind of green sickness, but she says she hasn't a pain or ache.

Pa—(Throws aside "Farmer's Advocate") Ma do let us set in.

Ma—Well here they are now—just draw up your chairs, all of you, and set in (Pa first seated) Miss Wise you set there by John James, he bein' more used to acting proper at the table than pa, who is a well enough meanin' man, for all he is like to cut his mouth from ear to ear usin' his knife so free like. Now help yourself, and everyone reach for what aint passed.

Pa—Yes ma. (Rising up, forks a big slice of bread across the table.)

Ma—Set down pa for the land's sake, where's the manners I was teachin' you?

Pa—You said "reach," ma.

Miss Wise—Your supper looks so good, I for one will certainly reach out if there is the least likelihood of anything escaping me. (Laughing.)

Maria—Pa, serve Miss Wise to some potatoes.

Pa—Sure child (puts on five).

Miss Wise—Oh, Mr. Sneckleby, I never could eat so many—only one, please. Oh, it is really too much.

Ma—Put on some headcheese too, pa—as I made out

of the old black pig that was so wise he could open the shed door himself.

Miss Wise—Oh, do give me some, Mr. Sneckleby—I will partake freely of it. I am sadly in need of wisdom at present.

Ma—Yes, child; eat all you want. Maria pass up the mustard and pickles. (All eat quietly for a few minutes).

James—I hope you will like the work here, Miss Wise.
(Pa holds knife and fork up straight on table and tilts back chair).

Pa—I don't see the pie Ma. Why ain't it on the table as usual instead of over there on the sink?

Ma—Will you set quiet Pa until your plate is changed?

Pa—My plate don't need changin' Ma its as clean as a biled shirt.

Ma—Speaking of the school Miss Wise, you'll find us much like other folks, good and bad all save the Minister, who has only been here a matter of a few months and has no woman to advise him and look to his wants, more's the pity.

Miss Wise—He seems to be in a class by himself. Have you met the Minister, Miss Sneckleby, or may I call you Jennie?

Marie—I would like so much to have you call me Jennie. I have met the minister once only. I have not been anywhere lately—I—

James—I have met him, he is a very fine fellow and afraid of nobody's opinion.

Ma—They do say as how he is engaged to a woman as will make a fittin' wife for the congregation, and the Minister as well, providin' he isn't too particular over looks, which don't count, as I told Pa here when I took him. She's a savin' settled down body as has no nonsense has Bersheba—

Miss Wise—Fortunate Man.

James—Everyone to his taste. (Looking at Jennie).

Pa—It would be fair wicked, to see the Minister throwed away on Bersheba, her bilin' up like a kittle all the time, not keepin' the lid down on her temper, which scalds all who come nigh her. I've a mind to warn him.

Ma—Don't you go doing anything of the kind Pa. You'd better be doing your chores as you understand. I do declare I have been that took back, I almost forgot to tell you, I have a letter from Ikey. Nov. I wonder Mam if you know our Ikey? Like as not you do. He lives in Toronto where you do and is often down to the stores.

Pa—He's tall and wears low cut boots and colored socks you could shoot peas through, and red necktie, not to mention collars that are fit to strangle him, bein' worse than what ma puts on me Sundays, me never hearin' a word the Minister says for thinkin' of gettin' home and castin' it. (Forks another piece of pie barely escapes teacher's eye.)

Ma—Pa, do be careful. You are like to put folk's eyes out. You would be sure to know our Ikey, Miss Wise.

Miss Wise—I am very sorry, but I can't recall him at present, Mrs. Sneckleby.

James—Toronto is not an easy place to locate people in now.

Ma—Well if you'd a once met Ikey, you'd have never forgot him. All the girls is crazy over our Ikey. I was jist sayin' to Pa here this very day, I wished Ikey would keep company with some nice girl, as would make him do his studies.

Pa—Or else stay at home and give me a lift with the chores.

Ma—Be quiet Pa, who knows? he may take a likin' to Miss Wise here when he comes home.

Maria—Don't Mother.

Ma—Don't what, Maria Jane. All the girls are took off their feet with Ikey

Pa—Like as not the schoolma'am has a steady young man, Ma.

Miss Wise (laughing)—Well I am sure it is very kind of you to think of me in that way, but having met so many it is hardly likely that your son will be interested in the poor little schoolteacher.

Ma—Stranger things have happened.
(James and Maria have been whispering quietly.)

Pa—It beats me out, why Ikey needs such a powerful lot of money, and schoolin' to git a woman. I had no schoolin' to speak of and only 50 cents, and had no trouble in gettin' ma here, who can't be beat.

James—A plain hardworking man stands a poor chance now to win the girl he wants, (looking at Jennie), beside the highly educated, monied young man.

Maria—The same can be said for the plain homekeeping girl.

Miss Wise—Such rank heresay from young people. Why I believe if we do our duty and live right, all kinds of lovely things are going to come our way, when the right time comes.

James—Thank you Miss Wise, I stand corrected.

Maria—Do you really believe that Miss Wise?

Miss Wise—Of course I do Jenny. I am sure I am going to have a lovely time here. I am persuaded the children are nice and hope the trustees have no rooted and grounded objections to raising the school windows and admitting fresh air.

Ma—Well they do tell as how the Minister wanted the windows riz up a bit, and Gideon Longface, he got up and, says he, if that window is riz one inch out I go, gettin' on his hat.

James—Gideon is not an enthusiast over ventilation.

Miss Wise—And do tell me what happened.

Ma—Well the Minister answered real polite spoken, says he, Well Brother Gideon we will be sorry to lose you, but you will not escape the fresh air by going outside.—(All laugh)

Miss Wise—I like his treatment of the subject. I do hope the trustees will be nice to me.

Pa—The trustees is only Gideon and me and the Minister as comes to take the place of Jonas Brown who has gone bed rid, bein' on his back with his legs two years gone by. They was to call in to-night they allowed.

Ma—(Jumping up)—Here tonight! and me settin' round. Pa you and John James lav hold of that trunk. Be smart now. Maria Jane get riddin' up this clutter. Pa—Pa—

Pa—Yes, Ma.

Ma—Go and git your chores done, you're a handless body. Be thankful for a wife as ain't afraid of layin' her hand to a bit of work.

Miss Wise—I will go to my room awhile. Shall I say goodnight Mr. Hughson. I shall call upon you to defend me if ever I get into serious difficulties with the trustees. (Laughing)

James—I will count it a pleasure to do anything I can for you Miss Wise. Just call on me. (All go out but James and Jenny.)

James (Comes over to Jenny)—What is the matter

Jennie? You don't seem to want to speak to me. Have I annoyed you? You see I did not know until tonight why you were so changed since that young city chap was here with Ikey.

Maria—I don't know what you mean. Isn't she pretty Jamie. And aren't her clothes lovely? Oh I do wish—

James—If you mean Miss Wise she certainly looks well, and puts her clothes on alright.

Maria—There now, I knew you felt that way, clothes count for everything.—Goes out.

James—(Gets hat and coat)—Well, alright, if Jennie is going to treat me like that I won't impose myself on her again in a hurry. She can have the city chap with the fine clothes, if that is all she thinks counts.

SCENE III.

Table cleared, colored cloth and lamp on table. Pa comes in takes off smock, pulls off long boots with bootjack, gives quick wash in basin and combs up hair.

Pa—I guess Gideon Longface will be along now any time to see the new school ma'm. Hope he aint hard on her, she ain't oversized or strong lookin' for sure.—(Rap at door)—Come in Gideon, oh, it is you Mr. Hardy too, always glad to see the Minister of a week day. Come away in. Ma, here's the Minister.

The Minister—I thought I would come over with Mr. Longface, as I am acting trustee at present.

Pa—To be sure and right glad we are to see you. Set down do, the folks will be down in a minute. Here Gideon, can't you set down a bit and rest yourself? Here—

Gideon—There ain't no rest in this weary world, settin', or standin', I say—

The Minister—What is your particular trouble Gideon, may I ask?

Gideon—Trouble enough. We are all born to trouble and sorrow, and our life is one long dead march to the grave yard, so it is.

Pa—You ain't got any more trouble than other folks Gideon as far as 'ee. Your crops was good and you have as hard workin' a woman as any man could ask or git.

Gideon— (Groans with face in hands) —The heart knows its own trouble it does.

The Minister—I believe Miss Wise the new teacher has arrived.

Pa—Sure. And she'll be needin' us all to lend a hand to help her with the youngsters I'm thinkin.' She has a pretty way of lookin' at you, and speakin', but she don't look over strong, she don't.

Ma (entering)—Why its the Minister himself. You're kindly welcome. Pa, why didn't you take the Minister into the parlor instead of settin him out in the kitchen like common folks? Pa never uses the bit of brain he has Mr. Hardy, unless I am on hand to tell him every step to take, he is for puttin' his foot in it every time, he is.

Pa—I don't put my foot in the parlor though Ma, any oftener than I can help.

The Minister—It is very comfortable here Mrs. Sneckleby, don't go into the parlor on my account.

Pa—A fellow feels more at home here, as I tell Ma, when I'm settin' on one of the parlor chairs I feel as if I was strayed and stole, and get into some other folks pasture field.

Ma—Small danger of you being stole or strayin' neither Pa.

The Minister—Well by all means, we will stay here, if Mrs. Sneckleby will permit.

Ma—Why Gideon, I do declare I was so took up with seein the Minister I almost forgot to notice ordinary folk.

Gideon—And why should you notice me? I am no more than a worm crawling in the dust to its long home. (Sighs)

Ma—There ain't no dust round here Gideon Long-face I'd have you to know. I'd wear my fingers to skin and bone, cleanin', afore I'd have dust.

(Enter Miss Wise)

Ma—Oh here is the new teacher, this is Mr. Hardy the Minister, he has only been a few months in these parts himself.

The Minister—How do you do Miss Wise, you will allow me to welcome you to our district in your very important capacity.

Miss Wise—How very kind of you Mr. Hardy. It is quite the first time I have been welcomed in a capacity. I am overcome with the dignity and importance of my position.

The Minister (laughs)—I am afraid I have been unfortunate in my manner of expression, Miss Wise.

Pa (to Gideon)—Young folks will be young folks to be sure, like as not these two will be took with one another.

Ma—Do hush Pa.

Gideon (comes forward)—So you're the new school-m'am, as is to lead the crookit feet of our children along the slippery paths as leads to learnin'.

Miss Wise—I am going to attempt to teach the children Mr—, Mr—.

Pa—Gideon Longface.

Gideon—Well Simon Sneckleby and myself and the minister here is the trustees, and if you want things done about the school such as a window riz, or if you want money to lay out on a box of chalk, bring the matter before the trustees and we'll hold a meeting.

Miss Wise—Oh!

Pa—For my part I say give the teacher the bit. Women folks is always easier to handle if you give them the bit.

The Minister—Sound philosophy Simon.

Pa—Take these Cobb boys, they won't stand for no teacher bossin over them, and Selina Solder, she pulled the last teacher's hair off in her hand, she did, bein' that set against doin' her sums.

Gideon (sighing)—It's a world of trouble Mam, Nation rising against nation, every man's hand set against his brother's, sister's likewise.

Pa—Don't take on Gideon, we've lived next farms for twenty years past. I ain't never set no hand against yours.

The Minister—The world is pretty much what you make it Gideon.

Gideon—Well I don't see there is any call for me to stay. I am down on layin' out any money on schools. Book-learning just puts wrong ideas into folk's heads and puts them up to leave the farm.

Miss Wise—Did I understand aright, that you are one of my trustees Mr. Longface?

Pa—Sure he is. Don't mind Gideon, he is a snarlin' dog he is, but don't do no bitin', the Minister and me keep him muzzled up when there is business doings on, sich as puttin a few shingles on the roof, or buyin' a new length of stove pipe for the box stove, don't we Mr. Hardy.

The Minister—We have had our encounters Simon, but so far have not gained much ground.

Gideon—Well I'm going to drag myself over the road home, who knows if I'll ever git there, life is so uncertain, and fleetin'. Goodnight mam, when you've gone up and down in the world and to and fro in it as long as I have your very heart and soul will cry out in bitterness—"life is no more than a dishcloth wrung dry it is"—Good night all.

Pa—Cheer up Gideon, I will see you off the farm safe anyway

Miss Wise (sinking into chair)—What a perfect Misererie of a man—I am positively limp. How am I ever to stay here Mr. Hardy? This is my first

time away from home and I never taught school before. Fancy pulling the other teacher's hair out. I confess my heart is melted within me.

The Minister—Cheer up Miss Wise, my prophetic soul tells me you will win out, I will count it a privilege to help you in anyway I can.

Miss Wise—In a hair pulling contest.

The Minister—To the bitter end.—(Laughing.)
(Goes over to him and shakes hands while thanking him. Miss Buck comes in and sees her holding his hand.)

Bersheba—Simon told me to walk right in (stands and stares). What do I see? Might I inquire is this the new schoolma'm, did you know my friend, the Minister before?

The Minister—Miss Buck, allow me to introduce Miss Wise. (Don't shake hands—stands back)

Bersheba—How do you do. If I were to speak my mind I would say that you are too immature, and I believe in young women dressing plain, and in good taste, so as not to draw men's attention. Look at my clothes, you would do well to imitate me.

Maria (just entered)—Excuse me Bersheba, I overheard you. I think Miss Wise looks sweet in that dress. I don't think ugly clothes tend to make one any better, do they Mr. Hardy, (shakes hand)

The Minister—This is a delicate subject for me Jennie.

Bersheba—So your head's turned already. To my way of thinkin', it would have been much better to have had a plain dressed, sensible looking woman as teacher, and I know the Minister (my Friend) will agree with me.

Ma (rushes in)—Well now Bersheba, I might have knowed you'd have been here, you and the Minister bein' so took up. I said to Pa no later than yesterday that the Minister couldn't do better by the congregation than to take a good plain settled down woman like you Bersheba—which I am sayin' to his face.

The Minister (embarassed)—I do not doubt there are many women who would do honor to the congregation as the wife of the Minister, but I had not considered placing the responsibility on any woman's shoulders—until tonight, I—(looking at Miss Wise.)

Bersheba—I know what you want to say tonight, (goes up nearer smiling) I will be afraid to go home alone it is so dark. (Rap)

Ma—Come away in Mary. This is Miss Wise our new teacher.

Mary—You are very welcome Miss Wise.

Ma—You know Miss Wise, our Ikey kept company with Mary, steady, but bein' as he was havin' such hard work gettin' through she gave him up. I never hold it agin her tho—(Come this way Bersheba). (They go out).

Mary—(Speaks while they are leaving). That is

hardly correct, Mrs. Sneckleby, I thought Ike should have stayed on the farm as I did not consider him a student. Miss Wise will hardly be interested in our personal affairs.

Miss Wise—Indeed I feel sure I am going to be deeply interested.

The Minister (having spoken to Mary) (Mary and Maria go out)—You will find the greatest kindness Miss Wise, the school children are bright and interesting.

Miss Wise—Decidedly so, if I am to credit the hair pulling rumor.

The Minister (laughing)—That happened before my time, possibly such occurrences are rare.

Miss Wise—It would be an experience which would hardly stand repetition. (Both laugh)

Bersheba (comes in)—I never was one to stand for levity and idle talk. I am sure Mr. Hardy you will be glad of an opportunity to escape. I am going and the way is dark—I am nervous.

The Minister—Certainly I will walk home with you. I am going in that direction.

Bersheba—Even if you weren't going my way you would come anyway—I know you would.

The Minister—I hope I am considerate of all women.

Ma—To be sure you are, not appearin' special took up with any one of them.

Bersheba—How do you know? folks shouldn't be so quick to speak.

The Minister—May I call and take you for a drive tomorrow Miss Wise. We have many pretty bits of scenery around?

Miss Wise—That is extremely kind of you. You will gain the blessing which comes from entertaining strangers.

The Minister—Who prove to be angels.

Miss Wise—Not necessarily, sometimes they prove guilty of base ingratitude.

The Minister—I prefer to hold the former belief.

Bersheba—Call around on the way for me Mr. Hardy, your buggy holds three, I don't consider it seemly for you to be seen with the new school m'am alone.

Miss Wise—What can you possibly mean? Why should I hide myself? Is there any reason why I should not go Mr. Hardy.

The Minister—If there were I would not have suggested it Miss Wise.

Miss Wise—Oh, forgive me Mr. Hardy, you won't misunderstand me will you? I think I am tired, everything is new and strange.

Bersheba—There is no call for such a fuss over a little drive with me and the minister, we'll set you down if you get tired of being a third party, and you can walk back. (Goes out.)

The Minister—I will call for you alone tomorrow at three. I will take care of you—the best of care.

Miss Wise—Thank you, you are very kind. (Minister goes out) (Mary comes in quickly.)

Mary—I do hope you will not have a poor opinion of me from what you heard tonight, Miss Wise, I did not give Ikey up because he was long in getting thro, he never was intended to study, he doesn't like it and is only going to please his mother, he is such a good farmer and not one bit lazy.

Miss Wise—Well never mind dear, it will turn out alright, just wait. I feel sure we are going to be good friends. You are not going home alone.

Mary (laughs)—Oh I am not the least bit nervous.
(Both go out together.)
(Enter Ma and Pa—Pa in sock feet)

Ma—Pa I do wish you wouldn't walk in your sock feet afore folks. If I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times.

Pa—That you have Ma, you've done your duty by me, you have. (Winds clock, calls cat, puts her out, yawns loudly)

Ma—It do beat all how Bersheba lays holt of the Minister, and he do seem to like it.

Pa—That's where you need your glasses Ma—he ain't had eyes for anyone alnigh but the purty little teacher, as has big searching eyes like Rover, as was run over at the train crossin'.

Ma—I do declare Pa, what little sense you ever had is leavin' you, don't leave your boots lyin' round underfoot and before you go sayin' things you don't know nothin' about, ask your lawful wife.

Pa—Sure Ma. (Both go out, Ma carrying lamp.)

SCENE IV.

Company

Ma in big apron bustling in and out. Pa in choked high collar, tight black coat; Miss Wise, pretty light dress, white shoes; Maria, light muslin dress, white shoes, blue ribbon, hair curled and done loosely.

Ma—It's most time the folks was comin'. Who'd think the schoolma'm had been here goin' on six months and every mother's son of us likin' her better every day, bless her. Maria Jane, come child, come away down, don't be fussin over yourself.

Maria—Yes Mother, just a minute.

(Ma flying around dusting.)

It do beat all how Mar Jane has picked up in her looks, they allow she is the best looking girl in these parts, the dead image of me when I was her age, not that I've changed over much. I am glad I laid out that five dollars on her, she and the schoolma'm spent it to the last cent on her fixin's.

Maria (entering)—Mother dear, how do I look, don't you like my new dress? Miss Wise and I made it. Isn't it sweet?

Ma—Well I will say, which is more's the shame, you bein' my own flesh and blood and as like your ma as two peas, "fine feathers makes fine birds" they do and no mistake.

Maria—Wasn't it lovely of Miss Wise though to help Mother? she is so unselfish and thoughtful of everyone.

Ma—Which I was just sayin, as she has only been among us a matter of six months, and the pupils is just lambs and every man, woman and child runnin' to do her biddin'.

Maria—Oh, I am so thankful we took her to board mother.

Ma—Just take your Pa for instance he is gettin that peaceful and obedient like, never talkin' back, that times I fear he is low in his health and is going to be took.

Maria (laughing)—Not a bit of it mother. What can I do to help you? The friends will soon be in to spend the evening.

Ma—Run child and ice the two cakes and whip the cream for the pumpkin pies; lay the table in the best room. Mind now don't break the best cups. Put on three kinds of pickles, spiced grapes and apple and red currant jelly, fly around now.

Maria—Yes Mother dear. (Rap at door—enter Minister.

Ma—Well now Mr. Hardy, come away in and lay by your hat, you can't come too often, though I will say you've visited constant the last six months, doin' your duty as trustee which was hard, comin' good and bad weather alike, consultin' over the school matters with the schoolma'm.

The Minister—I can assure you Mrs. Sneckleby I found great pleasure in doing my duty. (Enter Miss Wise)

Miss Wise—Why how do you do, Mr. Hardy, you have taken time by the forelock.

Ma—He hasn't taken no one by the forelock as ever I heard tell of, but I must leave you folks, I smell some 'hin' burnin'. (Runs.)

The Minister—I have come early Miss Wise that I may enjoy a few moments of your company.

Miss Wise—Well since you limit your enjoyment to a few moments, for your sake I trust the others may soon arrive. (Laughing.)

Minister—You know there is no limit to my enjoyment of your company, Miss Wise—Bonnie—I have told you so often.

Miss Wise—I met Miss Bersheba Buck today. In many ways she is so well qualified to be the wife of a Minister, she told me she always intended to marry a minister, and now her dreams were about to be realized.

The Minister—Indeed, and who is the happy man?

Miss Wise—Possibly that is for you to say, she is coming tonight, so is Ikey and his mother has set her heart on his falling in love with me, in order that I may fire him with ambition.

The Minister—Indeed and is there a likelihood of that taking place.

Miss Wise—Who dare prophecy? It remains to be seen, I am trying to cultivate a receptive state of mind, possibly I might consider it my duty to spur him on, as it were

The Minister—How absurd. I find you a most contradictory and elusive person at times, Miss Wise.

Miss Wise—I am sorry you do not like me.

Minister (rising)—Do not like you, Miss Wise, Bonnie, you know better. (Confusion, enter Ma and Ikey and James, all talking).

Ikey—Yes, Dad, bring the trunk in, I have come to stay for good.

James—I'll help.

Ma—Come to stay, what can you mean Ikey dear? Ma's own boy (patting him) you ain't got all your schoolin' yet, child.

Ikey—Well if I haven't mother it is high time I had.

Pa (Coming in rubbing his hands)—Ikey is goin' to stay at home on the farm Ma, we will buy that other hundred acres, sure we will Ikey boy. (goes out laughing)

Ma—You don't mean you've left your schoolin' Ikey? (Wiping eyes)

Ikey—Yes mother (putting arm around her)—I've wasted enough time and money, you can't fit a round peg into a square hole, cheer up mother.

Ikey—How are you Mr. Hardy.

The Minister—I am glad to see you Ike, you are just the kind of a young man I am looking for, you can fill a large and useful place here, men like you are badly needed.

Ikey—Well I am going to count for every bit that is in me. I believe I can be of some use here, but I was a failure at the University and would never have filled a man's shoes. I will be glad to help in the church in anyway I can.

The Minister—You will make good. Pardon me; but this is Miss Wise, who has charge of the school.

Ikey—I am glad to meet you Miss Wise, from the glowing accounts I hear of you and your work, you evidently are no failure

Miss Wise—I really have done no more than anyone would Mr. Sneckleby, the people are so kind and good.

Ma—Call him Ikey, Miss Wise, just plain Ikey. I do declare I am took back (wiping her eyes) I have worked and slaved for him since he was in bibs to get an eddication and not be jist like his pa.

Ikey—If I am as good a man as Dad, I will do well Mother.

Ma—To be sure your pa is good enough as men go, me tellin' him every turn to take.

The Minister—A wife can certainly prove a great help to her husband in his life work. (Looks at Miss Wise).

Ma—I always held that if our Ikey, having his Ma's brains, had kept company with a girl like the schoolma'm here, as would have put ambition into him, he'd have been the Prime Minister, would I say. (Wipes eyes) (Miss Wise goes out laughing; Minister follows)

Ikey—I am afraid not mother, both prizes are rather beyond my reach. (Pa entering)

Pa—Well James and I hefted that box in, there must be a powerful lot of books in it.
(Enter Maria and James)

Ikey—Look at our Jennie! What have you been doing to yourself Jane? It is a good thing Reggy De-Court who was here last winter can't see you now, his head would be more unscrewed than ever.

Maria (laughs)—How absurd Ikey, this is just a new dress.

Ikey—Well you look good to me.

James—Me too Ikey.

Ma—Come Ikey, come and git a bite to eat fore all the folks git here, where's your pa, I must tell him to mind his manners and not use his fork too free. Come.

Ikey—Alright Mother.

James—Is that city chap comin' tonight, Jennie?

Maria—He did not mention it.

James—He corresponds with you then.

Maria—I have written him lately, but received no answer.

James—Why did he not answer? Where you much disappointed.

Maria—Very much indeed. I am hoping every day to here from him.

James—I understand Jennie—I will go—

Maria—I might explain Jamie perhaps—I sent him his unpaid board bill—I was sorry not to get an answer as I wanted the money to buy some pretty clothes with. I couldn't bear to have you ashamed of me Jamie that is why I would not go out with you.

James—Jennie do you mean it? don't tease me Jennie, quick they are coming. I am going to tell them all tonight.

Maria (going out)—Think well for fear you rue, Jamie. (Enter the Minister).

James—Mr. Hardy, you are such a good friend that I want you to share my joy. It is alright with Jennie and I at last, I was afraid I had lost her.

The Minister—Lucky man James (shakes hands) I congratulate you with all my heart. She is a fine girl and she has made a good choice.

James—I am not good enough for her, but I will spend my life, trying to make her happy.

The Minister—You will succeed old man, never fear.
(Enter Bersheba and Ma.)

Ma—Here is Bersheba Mr. Hardy, do go out James, I do declare in my day when folks was keepin' company, third parties knowed enough to go out without waitin' to be told.

James—Oh certainly, I am sorry, I really did not know, pardon me.

Bersheba (very selfconscious) — Dear Mr. Hardy, fortune favors us at last. Oh well we will soon be together where there's no parting, unending bliss.

The Minister—What can you possibly mean, Miss Buck?

Ma—It beats me how dull the Minister is to be sure, even Pa would have sensed the meaning of that, Bersheba.

Bersheba—I have my boxes all ready, so there need by no more weary waiting.

Ma—Come Bersheba lay off your hat, here are all the folks. Go into the garden Mr. Hardy and tell Miss Wise to come and git the folks to do a bit of singin for us, where is all the young folks gone anyway, it do beat all. (Enter Mary and Maria.)

Maria—Oh Mary, isn't it wonderful? I am so happy. Ikey is home for good, he is going to stay on the farm.

Mary—Well, won't that be nice for you Jennie?

Ma—I am fair sick over it Mary, I had all planned for him to git an eddication and marry the school-ma'm.

Ikey—What's that Mother? Oh it's you Mary (shake hands warmly)

Mary (shyly)—I am glad to see you back Ike.

Ikey—Do you mean that Mary?

Ma—Oh here's Maybell Primrose and Birdie Walker, Maria Jane come, all shake hands laughingly with Ikey.

Maybell—Oh Ikey, we're so glad to see you.

Birdie—Why didn't you bring Reggie DeCourt with you again Ikey?

Ikey—Too many pretty girls around here. A fellow needs his head well screwed on.

Birdie—Oh I thought he was as beautiful as a dream, his eyes were eloquent.

Maybell—And his manners, be sure and bring him the next time, Ikey.

Ikey—I will if you will promise not to make him giddy with your music. (Enter Ma, Mrs. Crisp and son.)

Mrs. Crisp—I must see the schoolm'am, company or no company.

Ma—Which is too bad, bein' as we are havin' a few

in tonight, couldn't you and Tommy wait for another night, Jane?

Mrs. Crisp—No I won't wait, not one hour longer will I wait nor Tommy my own flesh and blood won't wait neither.

Miss Wise (entering)—Did you want to see me Mrs. Crisp?

Mrs. Crisp—Yes, m'am, I do, and I've brought Tommy himself, and I want to know how you dared punish him. I will have you up before the trustees I will for beating my child. (Enter Minister.)

The Minister—Pardon me Mrs. Crisp, but I am acting trustee, what is your grievance?

Mrs. Crisp—The schoolma'm here slashed my boy with a leather strap on his arm when he was sitting quietly in his seat studying his spellings.

Miss Wise—I am afraid you have been misinformed Mrs. Crisp.

The Minister—Well now, that is too bad Tommy; a leather strap eh, just lift up your sleeve and let us see.

Tommy hesitates, holds down sleeve.

Mrs. Crisp—Turn up your sleeve Tommy, and show the Minister.

The Minister—Come here Tommy, I will help you. Where is the bruise Tommy?

Tommy—Here (turns arm) No here, here I think is the round mark.

Mrs. Crisp—It was as round as an egg and all black and blue.

The Minister—Did you fall on a stone Tommy?

Tommy—No Sir, but Johnnie Slug, he pegged me with a stone as big as my fist.

The Minister—This bruise was caused by a round object, no strap could possibly have made a mark like that.

Tommy—No sir. I didn't think it could, but ma said she was sure the teacher done it when—when she sent me out of the room.

Miss Wise—What for Tommy (smiling)

Tommy—I'm not sure which of the things it was for, I think it was for pulling Billy Burr's hair.

The Minister—Well I guess you had better go home now Tommy, and behave better in school.

Tommy—Yes sir.

Miss Wise—Good bye Tommy, come early and help clean the chalk brushes tomorrow morning won't you?

Tommy—Sure, teacher. (Rushes out).

Mrs. Crisp—You need not tell me that Tommy was not abused by the teacher. I will see to it that

she leaves this school at the close of the term.

The Minister—I will use my influence as well Mrs. Crisp. (laughing).

Mrs. Crisp—As for you Mr. Hardy, neither Tommy or I will ever set foot in your church again. (Rushes out.)

Miss Wise—(To minister on the side)—How can I ever thank you enough for coming to my defence.

The Minister—I have the right to now, Bonnie

Miss Wise—Hush, they will hear you. (All enter talking.)

Ma—Set over here Gideon, I will send the Minister to hearten you up a bit.

Gideon—Worldly pleasure and joy is not for me.

Ikey—Hello there Gideon, how goes it? cheerful as ever, I see.

Ma—Do be careful the way you go about Pa, you will tread upon some one's toes.

Pa—Alright ma.

Ma—Here Bersheba, come and set over in your lawful place by the Minister, when are you two to be married, Bersheba? Ministers don't like to call out their own wedding you knew.

Bersheba—Any time now. My things are all in readiness.

The Minister (rising)—Miss Buck and friends, I hesitate very much to speak in this way but I am forced to do so, as there is a gross misunderstanding. I never have at any time paid Miss Bersheba Buck any more attention than I have paid to any other woman in the congregation. I regret very much that she has taken any slight courtesy I have extended to her seriously. I am proud to tell you I have secured the promise of a young woman to be my wife, one whom you have all learned to respect and love (takes Miss Wise's arm and they stand up) Let me introduce to you, your future Minister's wife.
(Bersheba flies out angry)

Ikey (jumps up quickly)—Well as this seems to be the right place to break news of this kind, I want to say that Mary has decided to take me at last, now that I have decided to settled down and make good as a farmer.

(Shaking hands and congratulations by all)
(Quiet)

Ma—Well this do beat all.

Pa—Come Ma, we might as well hold our golden wedding day, it's as good a time as any.

(Takes her out by the arm).

Ma—Pa where's the bit of sense you had when you married me?

Pa—I don't care a bootjack Ma where it is, long as I had sense enough once to get you for my woman.
(Hear, hear.)

Ma—Well I am fair took back, the schoolma'm to marry the Minister, that do beat all. Well I guess your that happy you all want to sing, Ikey you git them all to singin' and playin'.

Ikey—All right mother, but I am sure we can all sing better after eating some of your doughnuts.

Ma—Yes Ikey dear, you shall have all you want, but I do wish you'd have took to your schoolbooks like you did to doughnuts.

Ikey conducts program of simple old selections, of any length desirable, closing with three cheers for the young country schoolm'am and if in public hall

GOD SAVE THE KING.